

# Policing Covid19: Public experiences and perceptions during the lockdown.

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**The Centre for Social Innovation**

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## **Acknowledgements**

The project team would like to thank the members of public who participated in this research, colleagues and community groups who supported us, as well as Cleveland Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

In doing so, we would like to highlight to the reader that the views and opinions contained in this report belong to us and us alone. They must not be taken as being shared by any other person or organization, or as possessing the endorsement of our employer, Teesside University.

Finally, the reader is reminded that this is an independent project which obtained approval to conduct its research from Teesside University School of Social Sciences, Humanities & Law Research Ethics Committee. All data obtained for the purposes of this project was processed lawfully in the necessary performance of scientific or historical research or for statistical purposes carried out in the public interest, and it has been independently confirmed that the project provides suitable and specific measures to safeguard the rights and interests of the data subject in full compliance with the General Data Protection Regulation and the Data Protection Act 2018.

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## Executive Summary

### Response rate

539 respondents completed the survey, which is a robust sample. A similar survey by YouGov in April 2020 was completed by 1646 respondents (396 of whom are classified by the polling team as living in 'the North'). A Scottish Police Authority (SPA) survey was also undertaken in April 2020 with 1660 respondents and was repeated May 2020 with 1575 respondents.

### Respondent lockdown status, adherence to guidance and concern for the National Health Service (NHS).

Respondents by and large followed United Kingdom (UK) trends regarding their personal status, response to the government lockdown, and police use of Covid19 emergency powers.

- two-thirds of respondents (67%) reported they stayed at home most or all the time - 74% in comparative SPA survey.

- three-quarters of respondents (75%) reported that they tried to comply with all guidance provided to them - 80% in comparative SPA survey.

- three-fifths of respondents (58%) reported that a concern for protecting the NHS drove their actions rather than a concern with their personal protection (30%) or getting in trouble with Cleveland police (2%) - 61% in comparative SPA survey.

### Respondent view of police job performance, community presence and ability to respond quickly to events.

*"We need more police and they need more support."*  
[Survey Respondent].

Respondents were mainly positive when asked if they thought the police were doing a good job, with 60% saying they felt this was indeed the case - 57% in the comparative SPA survey.

However, they were:

- nearly twice as likely as Scottish respondents to view the police presence in their local area as 'not enough' - 72% in Teesside compared to 38% in Scotland - and half as likely to say it was 'about right' - 22% in Teesside compared to 44% in Scotland.

- two and a half times as likely as Scottish respondents to report a lack of confidence in the ability of police to deal with incidents as they occur - 58% in Teesside compared to 22% in Scotland - and to do so quickly - 58% in Teesside compared to 22% in Scotland.

### Respondent view of emergency measures, police use of them and management of public protests.

*"The police have been amazing near where I live"*  
[Survey Respondent].

Teesside survey respondents possessed similar attitudes to those in UK and Scotland in relation to key emergency measures:

- 81% comfortable with asking people to provide a valid reason for being out of home compared to 82% in UK and 80% in Scotland.

- 86% comfortable with issuing penalty fines for breaching lockdown, compared with 75% in UK and 87% in Scotland.

- 76% comfortable with arresting people who fail to comply with instructions to return home, compared with 72% in UK and 80% in Scotland.

In contrast, Teesside survey respondents did not fully support the approach taken by the police, with 53% feeling tougher action was needed compared to 14% in the UK and 35% in Scotland.

It is also clear respondents were more supportive of key measures which had caused some significant debate on their introduction elsewhere, but which had not been specifically used by Cleveland Police:

- 65% comfortable with use of drone technology, compared to 50% in UK and 43% in Scotland.

- 63% comfortable with use of facial recognition technology, compared to 50% in UK and 48% in Scotland.

- 60% comfortable use analysis of social media accounts, compared to 43% in UK and 38% in Scotland.

Finally, 89% reported that public protests should not take place, and the following survey comment encapsulates the general feeling regarding these events:

*"There is a time and a place for mass gatherings. Now is not it. Police put in a position of elevated risk. Protestors placing themselves in a position of elevated risk. Makes a mockery of those who have isolated and those who have cared for the sick during lockdown."*

[Survey Respondent].

*"I am absolutely horrified at the level of violence towards the police I have seen on the news and social media"*

[Survey Respondent].

## Recommendations

Two recommendations are made in relation to the terms of reference of the project.

### ***To understand community perceptions regarding Cleveland Police implementation of the Coronavirus Act powers.***

The survey conducted by the project team provides robust support for Cleveland police and the emergency measures introduced by the UK government during the lockdown period. The comparison with UK and Scottish respondents supports the view that methodological limitations have not negatively affected the findings, with resident's attitudes and experiences broadly conforming to those found elsewhere, and there furthermore being a logical reason for why they differ when they do so. However, the strength of feeling amongst respondents for supporting more intrusive measures and tougher form of police action, including prioritizing public health concerns over the right to publicly assemble to protest, does beg the question of if there is a self-selecting element to the sample which requires a degree of amelioration through further cross-sectional research.

#### **Recommendation One**

Its size and use of national-level questions from larger well-validated surveys, means the Teesside survey is arguably of a robust standard. However, it is recommended the PCC seek resource to fund further academic-led survey research incorporating a cross-sectional longitudinal design. This should be similar to the one used by the Scottish Police Authority. Particularly if there is a repeat of the types of emergency powers granted under the Coronavirus Act 2020.

### ***To understand how the community would like Cleveland Police and the OPCC to engage with them during the period of social distancing when traditional face to face engagement mechanisms are not appropriate.***

The public-interest need for further bespoke large-scale longitudinal survey-based research follows logically from the finding that support amongst respondents for the emergency measures overlaid their need for greater engagement with, and informational support from, Cleveland police.

For many survey respondents, their primary concern was not that their local police are socially distant during the lockdown, but that they appear to be socially absent at a time when they are worried about the day to day events they witness, both outside of the windows of their home, and in the local and national news and social media. Consequently, regardless of the accuracy or otherwise of public perceptions of crime and policing during the lockdown, it is important to ensure a concern with unpacking diversity of need is mapped into the design of survey questions

#### **Recommendation Two**

As a result of these considerations, it is recommended that matters of diversity of need, and the differential packaging of information and support related to this, form a key part of the development of the recommended survey instrument.

Fulfilling this recommendation will enable the PCC to more fully ascertain the range of need across the region, as well as account for key factors known to influence how people respond to advice issued by criminal justice agencies; for example, age, employment, gender, and political affiliation.

## Background

The Coronavirus Act 2020 granted the government emergency powers to handle the COVID-19 pandemic. The Act was introduced to Parliament on the 19th March 2020, passed through the House of Commons on the 23rd March, and the House of Lords on the 25th March, receiving royal assent on the 25th March 2020.

The Act allowed the government the discretionary power to limit or suspend public gatherings, to detain individuals suspected to be infected by Covid19, and to intervene or relax regulations in a range of sectors to limit transmission of the disease, ease the burden on public health services, and assist healthcare workers and the economically affected. Areas covered by the Act included the National Health Service, Social Care Services, Schools, the Police, the Border Force, Local Councils, Funeral Services, and the Courts.

To this end, the project had two aims:

1. To understand community perceptions regarding Cleveland Police implementation of the Coronavirus Act powers.
2. To understand how the community would like Cleveland Police and the OPCC to engage with them during the period of social distancing when traditional face to face engagement mechanisms are not appropriate

Under the terms of this agreement, the project team sought approval to conduct the research from the ethics committee of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Law at Teesside University. This guaranteed all research participants their right to anonymity and confidentiality, as well as offered members of the public reassurance regarding the impartial nature of the work.

This report outlines the findings of the project. It details the results of survey work conducted by the project team between May and June 2020, supplemented by more qualitative feedback obtained via an anonymous email 'mailbox' for members of the public to send their responses to.

## The Teesside Survey

To establish the reliability and validity of its findings, the project utilised several well-validated national-level survey instrument questions (see appendix one). This approach was chosen as the questions were used by the special review panel of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), as well as in a recent YouGov poll, to capture public opinion concerning police use of Covid19 powers. The YouGov poll was undertaken in April 2020, and was completed with 1646 respondents, 396 of whom were classified by the polling team as living in 'the North'. The SPA survey is ongoing, but was first undertaken in April and repeated May 2020, with 1660 and 1575 respondents, respectively.

The project survey yielded 539 survey responses (incomplete responses were not included). In presenting its findings when possible the project includes the results of the two comparative surveys. However, as is indicated when appropriate, in some significant instances it is only possible to compare Teesside findings to those from the SPA survey.

As the three surveys differ in size and overall focus, any comparative analysis must be approached with an appropriate degree of caution. The SPA and YouGov polling were cross-sectional and therefore involve an element of purposeful sampling to account for known categorical factors which may influence attitudinal responses to questions, for example, respondent's age, gender, and political affiliation.

The project team were unable to replicate this methodological standard, as a mixture of resource and time limitations meant the Teesside survey had to be conducted online and be self-completed by respondents.

The following pages of the report show comparative categorical differences between the surveys across the attitudinal response ranges used when answering questions. When reflecting on this, it is tentatively concluded that due to its robust sample size ( $n = 539$ ) the Teesside survey must be viewed as being a representative measure of the general regional population.

However, further research is needed before firm conclusions can be made regarding the meaning and implications of the findings presented. As a result, the report restricts itself to detailing the information collected and concludes with a recommendation which if accepted should enable the PCC to collect community feedback more tailored to directly informing stakeholder action during a future lockdown.



# Findings

## Introduction

To establish the reliability and validity of its findings, the project utilised several well-validated national-level survey instrument questions (see appendix one). This approach was chosen as the questions were used by the special review panel of the Scottish Police Authority (SPA)<sup>1</sup>, as well as in a recent YouGov poll<sup>2</sup>, to capture public opinion concerning police use of Covid19 powers.

The YouGov poll was undertaken in April 2020, and was completed with 1646 respondents, 396 of whom were classified by the polling team as living in 'the North'. The SPA survey is ongoing, but was first undertaken in April and repeated May 2020, with 1660 and 1575 respondents, respectively<sup>3</sup>.

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## Respondents lockdown status and adherence to governance guidelines

The Teesside sample follows larger well-known national-level trends in relation to public self-reported status and degree of compliance with lockdown requirements, as well as why they choose to comply in the manner they did.

In summary, most respondents (58% Teesside and 62% Scotland) spent their time at home. Perhaps following well-reported national differences between Scotland and England, slightly more respondents to the SPA survey were shielding/self-isolating and slightly more Teesside survey respondents left their homes but reported they practiced social distancing when doing so. Both sets of survey respondents reported that their actions were driven by a concern for protecting themselves (30% Teesside and 25% Scotland) and the NHS (58% Teesside and 61% Scotland).

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<sup>1</sup> Scottish Police Authority (2020) *SPA Public Opinion Survey Findings - May 2020*. Available at: <http://www.spa.police.uk/performancepages/622902/> Last Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020

<sup>2</sup> YouGov (2020) *Crest Policing Covid Polling Results – April 2020*. Available at: [https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/7jrz6rsm5g/Crest\\_CoronaPolicing\\_200405.pdf](https://docs.cdn.yougov.com/7jrz6rsm5g/Crest_CoronaPolicing_200405.pdf) Last Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

<sup>3</sup> For sake of convenience, the project uses the second May survey as a point of comparison

**Table One: research participants response to lockdown**

<b>QUESTION: Which of the following statements best describes your current personal status regarding the Coronavirus / Covid-19 lockdown?</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
I am shielding myself or self-isolating	13%	9%	-4%
I spend most of my time at home, and practice social distancing when I go out into public places	62%	58%	-4%
I have to leave the house quite often (for work and/or exercise and/or caring responsibilities) but practice social distancing whenever possible	25%	31%	+6%
None of the above	1%	2%	+1%
<b>QUESTION: Since the lockdown measures came into effect, how would you best describe your own degree of compliance with public health guidance?</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
I have tried to comply with all of the guidance	80%	75%	-5%
I have tried to comply with most of the guidance	18%	20%	+2%
I have tried to comply with some of the guidance but not all of it	2%	4%	+2%
I have not tried to comply with the guidance	0	1%	+1%
<b>QUESTION: Which of the following most closely describes your main reason for deciding on whether to comply with the public health guidance on staying at home and avoiding unnecessary travel?</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
I want to play my part in protecting the NHS and saving lives	61%	58%	-3%
I am worried about catching the Coronavirus	25%	30%	+5%
I do not want to get into trouble with the Police for breaking the law	6%	2%	-4%
I do not want to attract negative judgement from my friends, family, neighbours and community	5%	3%	-2%
Something else/none of the above	3%	7%	+4%

**Public perceptions of local police presence and capacity to quickly deal with events**

*"The police have done a great job - thank you!"*  
[Survey Respondents].

As table two below shows, the Teesside sample also follows Scottish trends in relation to respondent's view of local policing, with 60% of Teesside and 57% of Scottish respondents replying positively (from fair to excellent) when asked what they thought about the job being done by the police. However, there is also a clear tendency for Teesside respondents to express greater concern regarding policing capacity, in terms of both level of local presence and ability to respond quickly to events. Indeed, Teesside respondents were:

- nearly twice as likely as Scottish respondents to report view police presence in local area 'not enough' (72% in Teesside compared to 38% in Scotland) and half as likely to say it is 'about right' (22% in Teesside compared to 44% in Scotland).

- over two and a half times as likely as Scottish respondents to report a lack of confidence in the ability of police to deal with incidents as they occur (58% in Teesside compared to 22% in Scotland) as well as to do so quickly (58% in Teesside compared to 22% in Scotland).

**Table two: Public perceptions of the Policing capacity**

<b>QUESTION: Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in your local area are doing?</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Excellent	17%	14%	-3%
Good	25%	23%	- 2%
Fair	15%	23%	+8%
Poor	6%	15%	+9%
Very poor	4%	14%	+11%
Don't know	33%	11%	- 22%
Rather not say	1%	-	-
<b>QUESTION Overall do you think that the police presence in your local area is?</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Not enough	38%	72%	+34%
About right	44%	22%	-22%
Too much	2%	-	-2%
Don't know	16%	6%	-10%
<b>QUESTION How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to respond quickly?</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very confident	17%	7%	-10%
Fairly confident	42%	29%	-13%
Not very confident	14%	27%	+13%
Not at all confident	8%	31%	+23%
Don't know	18%	5%	-13%
Rather not say	-	1%	+1%
<b>QUESTION How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to deal with incidents as they occur?</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very confident	18%	8%	-11%
Fairly confident	43%	30%	-14%
Not very confident	15%	36%	+12%
Not at all confident	7%	22%	+24%
Don't know	16%	4%	-11%
Rather not say	-	-	-

Table two also highlights a third key difference between the respective Teesside and Scottish surveys - respondents were less likely to reply 'don't know' when asked these questions. One possible explanation for the less confident tone to the Teesside responses is that as it is self-selecting, the sample may well contain an inherent 'negativity bias'. It cannot be denied that it is possible that the Teesside survey may have been completed by respondents who participated because they held a pre-existing negative view of the police. However, when taking a holistic view of the dataset findings, an equally valid interpretation is that these responses are perhaps due to more Teesside respondents having had contact with the police in their local area. As a result, they may have felt better placed to form a clear judgement when asked these questions, and in their

view Cleveland police were not present enough in their local area, and so were perhaps unable to quickly respond to events when they occur.

This is a persuasive interpretation given the generally positive nature of respondent's views concerning the job done by the police. Certainly, it is important to remember that these questions are not designed to capture public feedback concerning the strategic deployment of Cleveland police force during the Covid19 lockdown. Rather, they arguably point toward public perceptions of broader operational capacity issues, such as the impact of the government austerity agenda on the ability of the police to respond to the situation.

### Public perceptions of police use of Covid19 powers

This interpretation also seems particularly persuasive when participants attitudes toward the Covid19 measures are considered. As table three shows, Teesside respondents felt much more comfortable with the measures introduced in response to Covid19, than those who completed the UK and Scottish surveys<sup>4</sup>. This includes measures which drew significant debate in the news, online social media, and academic discourse; for example, police use of drone technology.

The Teesside survey undoubtedly robustly mirrors the trends found in the UK and Scottish surveys regarding broad public support for the NHS, the emergency measures, and the police. However, further research is needed to explore if the strength of this support present in the Teesside survey, is an artefact of the self-selecting nature of the sample. Given the findings, it is important to account for key respondent characteristics which are known to be possible contributory factors influencing public perceptions of community-based policing; for example, their age, gender, political affiliation, and urban/rural location.

**Table three: To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with each of the following police measures in response to COVID19?**

<b>Roadblocks asking motorists to justify their journeys</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	35%	31%	33%	56%	+23%
Fairly comfortable	35%	41%	38%	25%	-13%
Fairly uncomfortable	16%	17%	17%	8%	-9%
Very uncomfortable	8%	9%	9%	9%	-
Don't know	6%	2%	4%	2%	-2%
<b>Using drone technology / unmanned aircraft to photograph people making unessential journeys</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	23%	20%	22%	41%	20%
Fairly comfortable	27%	23%	25%	23%	-2%
Fairly uncomfortable	24%	29%	27%	16%	-11%
Very uncomfortable	19%	23%	21%	18%	-3%
Don't know	7%	4%	6%	2%	-4%

<sup>4</sup> Respondents were aware that the following measures had not been employed by Cleveland Police: Drone technology; Analysis of social media accounts; Naming and shaming on social media; Facial recognition technology.

<b>Analysis of social media accounts (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook etc) to identify those breaching the lockdown</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	20%	19%	20%	39%	20%
Fairly comfortable	23%	19%	21%	21%	-
Fairly uncomfortable	24%	24%	24%	16%	-8%
Very uncomfortable	24%	29%	27%	22%	-5%
Don't know	9%	8%	9%	2%	-7%
<b>Facial recognition technology to identify people in public places breaching the lockdown</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	24%	19%	22%	41%	20%
Fairly comfortable	26%	29%	28%	22%	-6%
Fairly uncomfortable	21%	24%	23%	13%	-10%
Very uncomfortable	21%	23%	22%	21%	-1%
Don't know	7%	6%	7%	3%	-4%
<b>Issuing people breaching the lockdown with penalty fines</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	41%	53%	47%	65%	18%
Fairly comfortable	34%	34%	34%	21%	-13%
Fairly uncomfortable	13%	7%	10%	7%	-3%
Very uncomfortable	13%	4%	9%	6%	-3%
Don't know	6%	2%	4%	1%	-3%
<b>Arresting people who fail to comply with police instructions to return home</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	41%	48%	45%	58%	+13%
Fairly comfortable	31%	32%	32%	24%	-8%
Fairly uncomfortable	15%	10%	13%	8%	-5%
Very uncomfortable	7%	8%	8%	8%	+1%
Don't know	6%	3%	5%	1%	-4%
<b>Asking people to provide a valid reason for being out of their home</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	47%	51%	49%	59%	+10%
Fairly comfortable	35%	29%	32%	26%	-6%
Fairly uncomfortable	9%	11%	10%	7%	-3%
Very uncomfortable	5%	4%	5%	7%	+3%
Don't know	5%	5%	5%	1%	-4%
<b>Asking people to report others who breach the rules (i.e. by holding or attending gatherings)</b>	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
Very comfortable	24%	21%	23%	24%	+2%
Fairly comfortable	27%	30%	29%	40%	+12%
Fairly uncomfortable	25%	24%	25%	18%	-7%
Very uncomfortable	17%	20%	19%	14%	-5%
Don't know	8%	5%	7%	4%	-3%

## From policing Covid19 to policing protest

A final element in support of this cautious but positive interpretation of the findings, relates to public perceptions of the policing of mass gatherings, which due to the timing of the Teesside survey may well have influenced the nature of the responses. The 'Black Lives Matter' campaign had started by the time the survey, and it is clear participants were concerned about the policing of associated protest events during the lockdown. For example, when asked how much they agreed or disagreed with the advice in the UK that due to the coronavirus, mass gathering events should not take place, 75% strongly agreed and 14% agreed that they should not. The following comments encapsulate the general feeling amongst respondents regarding these events:

*"There is a time and a place for mass gatherings. Now is not it. Police put in a position of elevated risk. Protestors placing themselves in a position of elevated risk. Makes a mockery of those who have isolated and those who have cared for the sick during lockdown."* [Survey Respondent].

*"The local authority should not have granted permission for protests to take place. All protests should be illegal because they break the rules. Police should be empowered and required to break up all demonstrations."* [Survey Respondent].

It is clear Teesside respondents prioritised public health concerns over much-discussed civil liberty concerns which emerged as the lockdown progressed. An example of this is when they are asked about the handling of the lockdown by the police. Table four highlights that survey respondents may be less likely to express support for the approach taken by the police, but also were less likely to feel they went too far in using their powers, and indeed, overwhelmingly wanted them to take tougher action to ensure greater compliance with public health measures.

**Table four: police handling of the COVID19 lockdown**

<b>QUESTION:</b> Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of how the police in your area are handling the COVID 19 lockdown?	<b>UK</b>	<b>Scotland</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Teesside</b>	<b>Difference</b>
I fully support the approach taken by the police	42%	42%	42%	30%	-12%
I support the approach taken by the police but in some cases they are going too far	32%	10%	21%	5%	-16%
The approach taken by the police to enforcing the COVID 19 lockdown is too heavy handed	6%	1%	35%	2%	-15%
The police should take tougher action to ensure public compliance	14%	35%	25%	53%	28%
The police have no role in enforcing the COVID 19 lockdown, compliance should be a matter for individuals	2%	4%	30%	5%	-20%
None of the above	5%	8%	6%	4%	-2%

## Community Engagement and Social Distancing

*"I had a visit from two nice police officers to check and make sure I was ok after there was an incident near my home. Very reassuring."*

[Survey Respondent]

When supplemented with other small-scale data sources - including responses emailed through a confidential 'feedback mailbox' - it is clear respondents feel police engagement with members of the public during Covid19 needed to be more focused around ensuring day to day visibility within local communities. Additionally, within this, community engagement needed to be concerned with communicating how they were addressing criminal activity during the crisis, not just public compliance (or not) with lockdown measures and social distancing.

*"I think the biggest issue for the police is lack of staff, I have no doubt that they are doing the best they can with what they have, but at the end of the day it's just not enough, so you never really see them around here until it really kicks off."* [Survey Respondent].

*"Nothing has been done to stop vandalism during these gatherings.. Why? I spoke with an officer...who said 'There's no point in reporting things, we can do nowt right now'."* [Survey Respondent].

*"Policing in Middlesbrough is terrible, house burglary, auto thefts and gangs have become the norm."* [Survey Respondent].

It was not the purpose of this project to ascertain the validity of claims made by some respondents in their questionnaire, or to contrast these with local crime statistics to identify if these support the view that certain types of criminal activity have risen (or not) in their local area during the lockdown. Similarly, it was beyond the resource of the project team to investigate how best to balance the different needs of diverse community groups, in both rural and urban locations, particularly as its fieldwork was undertaken without large-scale funding resource, as well as during the personal movement restrictions associated with the Covid19 lockdown<sup>5</sup>.

The project team at one stage considered utilising telephone interviews to overcome these practical issues, however it quickly became apparent as survey findings emerged that fully examining these topics required more large scale survey work combined with detailed consideration of the underlying factors influencing respondent attitudes toward both the police and the emergency measures. Consequently, it is recommended that matters pertaining to diversity of service need due to social distancing measures, and the differential packaging of information resource and support need related to this (e.g. victims of domestic violence when compared to elderly residents living in isolated rural areas), form a key part of the follow-on work proposed in the conclusion of this report.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The survey conducted by the project team provides generally robust support for Cleveland police and the lockdown measures introduced by the government. The comparison with UK and Scottish supports the conclusion that methodological limitations have not significantly negatively affected the findings presented in this report, with the attitudes and experiences in Teesside broadly conforming to those found elsewhere. However, the strength of feeling amongst respondents for supporting more intrusive measures and tougher forms of police action, including prioritising public health concerns over the right to publicly assemble to protest, does beg the question of if there is a self-selecting element to the sample which requires a degree of amelioration through further cross-sectional research.

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<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that given the difficulties faced, the PCC kindly offered the project a budget of £1,500 to help cover some expenditure costs. However, due to emergent survey findings, the project did not utilise this budget, and therefore has not made an expense claim against it. Additionally, significantly large-scale funding and a dedicated research staff are needed to fully address the issues discussed here.

It is clear that members of the public want community engagement during lockdowns to not be solely driven by public health concerns. Regardless of lockdown measures used (or not), police and community interactions must retain a concern with how different stakeholder groups can help each other to maintain public order and reduce crime. The two recommendations detailed in this report support this approach within the context of promoting methodologically robust approaches to further intelligence gathering and future insight modelling, to better inform further strategic decision-making.

### **Recommendation One**

Its size and use of national-level questions from larger well-validated surveys, means the Teesside survey is arguably of a robust standard. However, it is recommended the PCC seek resource to fund further academic-led survey research incorporating a cross-sectional longitudinal design. This should be similar to the one used by the Scottish Police Authority. Particularly if there is a repeat of the types of emergency powers granted under the Coronavirus Act 2020.

The public-interest need for further bespoke large-scale longitudinal survey-based research follows logically from the finding that support amongst respondents for the emergency measures overlaid their need for greater engagement with, and informational support from, Cleveland police.

For many survey respondents, their primary concern was not that their local police are socially distant during the lockdown, but that they appear to be socially absent at a time when they are alarmed about the day-to-day events they witness, both outside of the windows of their home, as well as in the local and national news and on social media. Consequently, regardless of the accuracy or otherwise of public perceptions of crime rates and community policing strategy during the lockdown, it is important to ensure a concern with unpacking a broader range diversity of information and support need, is mapped into the design of future survey work conducted by the PCC and Cleveland police.

### **Recommendation Two**

It is recommended that matters of diversity of need, and the differential packaging of information and support related to this, form a key part of the development of the recommended repeat survey instrument.

Fulfilling this recommendation will enable the PCC to more fully ascertain the range of need across the region, as well as account for key factors known to influence how people respond to advice issued by criminal justice agencies; for example, age, employment, gender, and political affiliation.



## Appendix One

### Survey questions shared with SPA and YouGov polling

Which of the following statements best describes your current personal status regarding the Coronavirus / Covid-19 lockdown?

I am shielding myself or self-isolating

I spend most of my time at home, and practice social distancing when I go out into public places

I have to leave the house quite often (for work and/or exercise and/or caring responsibilities) but practice social distancing whenever possible

None of the above

Since the lockdown measures came into effect, how would you best describe your own degree of compliance with public health guidance?

I have tried to comply with all of the guidance

I have tried to comply with most of the guidance

I have tried to comply with some of the guidance but not all of it

I have not tried to comply with the guidance

Which of the following most closely describes your main reason for deciding on whether to comply with the public health guidance on staying at home and avoiding unnecessary travel?

I want to play my part in protecting the NHS and saving lives

I am worried about catching the Coronavirus

I do not want to get into trouble with the Police for breaking the law

I do not want to attract negative judgement from my friends, family, neighbours and community

Something else/none of the above

Taking everything into account, how good a job do you think the police in your local area are doing?

Excellent

Good

Fair

Poor

Very poor

Don't know

Rather not say

Overall do you think that the police presence in your local area is?

Not enough

About right

Too much

Don't know

How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to respond quickly?

- Very confident
- Fairly confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident
- Don't know
- Rather not say

How confident are you in the ability of police in your local area to deal with incidents as they occur?

- Very confident
- Fairly confident
- Not very confident
- Not at all confident
- Don't know
- Rather not say

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of how the police in your area are handling the COVID 19 lockdown?

- I fully support the approach taken by the police
- I support the approach taken by the police but in some cases they are going too far
- The approach taken by the police to enforcing the COVID 19 lockdown is too heavy handed
- The police should take tougher action to ensure public compliance
- The police have no role in enforcing the COVID 19 lockdown, compliance should be a matter for individuals
- None of the above

To what extent did you comfortable or uncomfortable with each of the following police measures introduced in response to COVID-19, but which are no longer in force? Please provide an answer all three if you feel you can.

*Asking people to provide a valid reason for being out of their home*

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Don't know

*Arresting people who fail to comply with police instructions to return home*

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Don't know

*Roadblocks asking motorists to justify their journeys*

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Don't know

To what extent are you comfortable or uncomfortable with each of the following police measures in response to COVID-19

*Issuing people breaching the lockdown with penalty fines*

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Don't know

*Asking people to report others who breach the rules (ie by holding or attending gatherings)*

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Don't know

*Using drone technology / unmanned aircraft to photograph people making unessential journeys*

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Don't know

*Facial recognition technology to identify people in public places breaching the lockdown*

- Very comfortable
- Fairly comfortable
- Fairly uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- Don't know